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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ABUJA 000387

SIPDIS

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FOR A/S WALTER KANSTEINER FROM AMBASSADOR JETER
ALSO FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/DSS/ITA, DS/ICI/PII AND AF/EX

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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: ADDITIONAL CONTINGENCY PLANNING

REF: A. A. STATE 44229

[1](#)B. B. ABUJA 339

[1](#)C. C. 02 ABUJA 3332

[1](#)D. D. 02 ABUJA 3333

Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter; Reason 1.5 (G).

[1](#)1. (S) Per ref A, Abuja and Lagos EACs met separately to examine their respective security postures, including a review of the possibility of reducing dependents and non-essential personnel. The following are the results of those deliberations.

EMBASSY ABUJA THREAT ASSESSMENT

[1](#)2. (S) There was unanimous agreement among Abuja EAC members that as the likelihood of a conflict with Iraq increases, large and possibly violent anti-American demonstrations will occur in Nigeria, with a possibility of violent protests in Abuja itself. There was also agreement that anti-American demonstrations could serve as a catalyst to violence in cities with existing ethnic or religious fault lines. The threat is mitigated somewhat by the GON's recent success in pre-empting two planned anti-American demonstrations. However, the GON's ability to respond effectively to a truly spontaneous protest was rated as questionable.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) ORCA, DAO, and RSO were in agreement that there are no new terrorist threats targeting American facilities or personnel in Nigeria. Existing threats were reported previously. A variety of multi-source reporting outlines these threats. Although Nigeria was mentioned in a recent public statement attributed to Usama bin Ladin, there was agreement that there is no evidence of an increased terrorist threat in Nigeria beyond that which already exists against all American facilities worldwide. Moreover, the purported UBL threat seemed to be directed against the GON. Additionally, members agreed that the threat of Iraq exploiting its official presence to conduct offensive activity against Americans is heightened as the potential conflict nears. The GON is aware of this potential threat and are monitoring their activities.

HOST COUNTRY CAPABILITIES

[1](#)4. (S) There was unanimous agreement that the Government of Nigeria (GON) has the political will to protect USG personnel and property against attacks. The GON recently pre-empted two planned anti-American demonstrations in Abuja, deploying significant additional security forces in the capital to accomplish this task. Embassy liaison activities indicate that GON intelligence services are focusing on identifying radical Islamic elements in-country and attempting to deter violent anti-American protests. The GON is also making a concerted effort to educate the public about the nature of the conflict in the Gulf, i.e., that it is political and not directed at Islam.

[1](#)5. (S) Despite the GON's strong political will, there was unanimous agreement that without advance notice of protest, the police likely cannot immediately control large anti-American demonstrations. Violent demonstrations in November 2002 related to the Miss World beauty pageant ended the aura of immunity from political violence that the capital had previously enjoyed. However, it was the Abuja EAC's assessment that the GON would use deadly force and deploy the

military to protect American personnel and property, if the use of lethal force became necessary.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

16. (S) With two exceptions, Abuja EAC members thought that an authorized departure in anticipation of adverse reactions in Nigeria was not appropriate under present circumstances. One of the two in favor stated that he was not unusually concerned about official Americans but hoped that the Mission's invocation of authorized departure would encourage private Americans to depart Nigeria, reducing the target profile of the relatively large American community presence. The EAC examined the Abuja tripwires established in December 2002, shortly after the Miss World riots (ref C) and determined that none of them had been crossed. A canvass of Mission employees revealed no fear and apprehension in the official American community" that had "risen to a point that community members are interested in authorized departure. In fact, the responses were the opposite, with a significant portion of Mission members expressing concern over being unable to return to Nigeria if they use their recently approved special R&R in the near future. Several said they would forego the special R&R if taking it seriously risked precluding their return to Post.

17. (SBU) At this time the Abuja EAC agreed that the updated Nigeria trip wires, Ref C, were still valid for Abuja and endorsed the following immediate measures to increase the overall security of American personnel and facilities in Nigeria:

-- Restrict Mission visitors to those conducting "business essential to the pursuit of priority USG objectives." This will reduce workload on the Mission and, in particular, will allow ADM & RSO to focus on key infrastructure and security issues.

-- Impose further travel restrictions on USG personnel, including requiring a 48-hour advance notification and RSO approval for non-emergency travel outside the capital city. Travel to and through major Northern population centers would be given special scrutiny.

-- Use of early PCS travel and liberal use of the special R&R for non-essential personnel.

-- Implementation of flexible work schedules.

-- Issuance of a stronger travel advisory (recommending that non-essential travel to Nigeria be deferred).

-- Recommending to the COM that the third floor of the new Chief of Mission Residence (not yet occupied) be designated and prepared as Post's new alternate command center.

18. (SBU) The Abuja EAC endorsed the following measures to be implemented upon the eventual onset of hostilities in Iraq:

-- Convening an EAC to assess host country response and consider additional security measures.

-- Closure of the Embassy and USAID for an initial period of two days. USAID will consider utilizing alternate work sites such as employee residences, and the Embassy will be staffed only by essential personnel.

-- Non-essential employees and dependents will be instructed to stay at home and monitor their Embassy-issued radio for situation updates.

-- Recommend closure of the American International School for two days.

-- A warden message to private Americans advising of the outbreak of hostilities, Embassy closure, and recommendations on security.

CONSULATE GENERAL LAGOS THREAT ASSESSMENT

19. (S) The Lagos Emergency Action Committee met February 21 and voted with near unanimity against recommending authorized departure at the present time. Participants agreed that there are currently no new or specific terrorist threats against official Lagos personnel. With one exception, EAC members opposed authorized departure status.

110. (S) Participants acknowledged that the impending war with Iraq may provoke reaction on the part of some Nigerians, given the sympathy many Nigerian Muslims have for Iraq as a Muslim nation and recent protests regarding Islamic sensitivities (e.g. the Miss World riots in Abuja). The EAC agreed on the need to monitor events closely and review our security assessment as the Iraq situation evolves.

HOST COUNTRY CAPABILITIES

111. (S) In discussions with the police, RSO has learned that the police intend to establish a road block at the entrance to Walter Carrington Crescent to prevent demonstrations from reaching the US Consulate and/or the British Deputy High Commission. That said, this action might not take place faster than a demonstration could materialize. However, several large contingents of police and private security guards could be mobilized to protect their own properties as well as ours, and could engage any demonstrators that became violent. A small military contingent is situated at a Nigerian Army Post Exchange across from the Consulate but the Exchange personnel are not sufficient in number to provide significant security assistance.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

112. (S) EAC explored potential alternatives to authorized departure for those employees who feel threatened on an individual basis. Sections should be encouraged to accommodate personnel who wish to:

---take R&R or personal leave;

---take other authorized leave;

---utilize Separate Maintenance Allowance status for EFMs;

---initiate early departure for non-essential employees and/or early pack-out dates for employees scheduled for Permanent Change of Station in the near future; and

---consider early departure for PCS family members.

To facilitate these options, Post Admin will continue to make dollars available to those who elect to travel on personal leave, and may request permission to increase the amount of cash kept on-site for personnel access.

113. (S) The Lagos EAC recognized the fluid security environment may require frequent reassessment meetings as events unfold in the coming weeks. Separately, POL and PAS will explore additional strategies to positively impact the security environment by countering the development of anti-U.S. sentiment in Lagos. Admin already has pro-forma evacuation orders prepared for personnel in the event of any move to departure status.

114. (S) At this time, the Lagos EAC concluded that previously established tripwires for Lagos are still valid. However, as the Nigeria travel advisory applies to all parts of Nigeria, members raised the potential need to review and/or revise the advisory should U.S. military actions in Iraq affect the local security environment. Members agreed that the local American public be duly notified via warden message and travel advisory of known changes to their security situation.

115. (S) To date, ConGen Lagos has

---Increased visual presence of the guard force REACT at the American Guest Quarters;

---Permanently assigned one member of the surveillance detection unit at the American International School;

---Met with Public Affairs Section Employees to review their security status;

---Briefed mailroom employees on procedures in the event of a suspected chem/bio attack.

116. (S) The EAC noted that the security situation might differ for Abuja and Lagos should hostilities begin. The Lagos Consulate General recommends the following measures to be implemented upon the eventual onset of hostilities in Iraq:

---Ask Nigerian authorities to immediately increase security on Walter Carrington Crescent;

---Convene an EAC to assess host country response and consider additional security measures;

---Close the Consulate General to all non-official visitors with the exception of those requesting American citizen services. Close the Public Affairs Section on Lagos Island for an initial period of one day until the security situation is reassessed;

---Non-essential employees and dependents will be instructed on further action via the radio network;

---Maintain close contact with the American International School and recommend action based on the prevailing situation in Lagos at the time;

---Send a warden message to private American citizens advising them of the outbreak of hostilities, and provide recommendations on security.

117. (SBU) The COM has reviewed this message and concurs with the EAC's recommendations.
JETER